

<b>Applicant Name</b>	Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), Water Resources Division (WRD)
<b>Project Name</b>	St. Mary Facilities Rehabilitation

### **Project Abstract**

The St. Mary Facilities, on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, transfer water from the St. Mary River Basin to the Milk River Basin. The facilities have operated for over 89 years with only minor repairs and improvements since initial construction. All of the structures have exceeded their design life and critically need major repairs or replacement. Major structures consist of Sherburne Dam, St. Mary Diversion Dam and headworks, 29 miles of canal, St. Mary and Hall Coulee steel siphons, and five concrete drop structures. The siphons are plagued with slope stability problems, metal fatigue, concrete deterioration, and leaks. The concrete drop structures are severely deteriorated. Landslides along the canal route and numerous structural deficiencies make the canal unstable and restricted, and most of the wastewater ways are inoperable. The canal capacity has declined from its 850 cfs design to 670 cfs. The economy and culture of the entire Hi-Line region was built around, and dependent upon, this water supply. Without accelerated local, state, and federal action to rehabilitate these facilities, the likelihood of a catastrophic failure is greatly increased.

State and local efforts, spearheaded by the lieutenant governor and governor's offices, are aggressively seeking federal funding for preplanning, design, and construction activities at these facilities.

Success of the overall project hinges on federal appropriations from Congress. The state-formulated proposal is separated into two phases:

- Phase 1: Planning and Design (\$8,025,000); and
- Phase 2: Construction (St. Mary) (estimated \$135 million).

The Phase 1 appropriation request has been drafted and submitted to Sen. Conrad Burns. The Reclamation and Development Grants Program (RDGP) funds would provide a state match contribution for Phase 1. Legislation that addresses the Phase 2 proposal was submitted to Legislative Drafting Services in March 2006.

Phase 1 will be managed by the DNRC; Phase 2 is expected to be managed by USBR/DNRC, either of which could assume the lead-agency role. Both agencies have the full complement of necessary staff and expertise to manage the overall project. An aggressive five-year completion schedule for Phases 1 and 2 has been initiated by the state in an effort to avert a catastrophic failure.